

Lessons Learned

By

Alan Palmieri

Having been involved in bodybuilding for over forty-five years... this year is forty-seven to be exact; I've learned a few things. Forty-seven years... my gosh, it doesn't even seem possible. It's easy to reminisce how the sport has changed over those years – don't wander now Alan, get back on track. Okay, back to it, I've learned some valuable lessons over those years; what to do and what not to do. No matter how badly I would like to present my experiences in a manner that would suit everyone, I know that can't be done. It's the same with humans as it is with snowflakes; no two are alike. So, what I present are lessons I learned in hopes they will help you avoid some mistakes. All I can offer is my experiences and maybe, just maybe they will provide you with enough insight so you can decide for yourself if they apply to you. Now then, in no particular order are S O M E of the lessons observed, learned, and experienced.

Lesson 1

Universally bodybuilders seem to make the same mistakes. I believe that's because no matter who we are or where we come from we all, every human being bodybuilder or not, share some of the same traits and desires. I believe we all want to be liked, we want to laugh, we want to love and be loved, we hurt, we have our ups and downs and for bodybuilders... we have EGO'S. A good trait if used properly. I have written about bodybuilding egos and I just can't think of doing it again but it's one of the main contributors in bodybuilding failures, not to mention injuries. A healthy ego is fine, just keep it in check. Don't allow it to control you, you control it. Don't let it force you into thinking you can lift 400 pounds when you know you can only handle 200 pounds safely.

Ego has done more to harm bodybuilders than any poorly constructed workout program or poor diet habits ever had the time to. As a bodybuilder, if you want to impress someone it shouldn't be with the amount of weight you lift, it should be with a perfectly symmetrical body. This brings up more ego problems. Some bodybuilders feel they need to strut around flexing all the time. Instead of presenting a powerful, self-confident and well mannered individual some bodybuilders walk around like egotistical, air-heads that turn everyone off. Sure you need to be proud of your hard work and accomplishments but be thoughtful and respectful and don't let ego ruin an otherwise good thing.

Lesson 2

Over training is perhaps the most common mistake made and no matter how much caution is advised it seems to always be ignored. Over training is not only a problem for the new trainee it is also a problem for the intermediate and advanced as well. It is especially prevalent in the early stages as enthusiasm runs wild and rookies tend to overdo things in an effort to develop their bodies in seventy-two hours.

Bodybuilding doesn't work that way, never has and never will. Building the body takes time, I don't care what advertisement or magazine you read that tells you differently. A new trainee will definitely make faster gains than a more experienced person. At the start gains and results come quickly because your body is not familiar to the training. As you become more advanced the gains and results start to slow and usually so does enthusiasm. Here is the point in time when the vast majority of people start to skip on their training; one missed workout leads to another, and another, until finally all training comes to a halt. Three months is the average length of time it takes for most people to find one reason or another to stop training.

Don't overdo it and be patient and consistent!

Lesson 3

One of the most over used accessory a bodybuilder has at their disposal is the scale. There are a number of reasons for this and to be honest, outside of having to

qualify for an activity requiring a weight limit, I don't see any need a bodybuilder would have for a scale. It's not how much you weigh but what you feel and look like.

Insurance firms and some medical personnel consider a scale and an individual's weight to be one of the most important instruments in calculating a person's fitness level. I have never agreed with the weight charts they use, you know the ones, those that say if you are this tall you should weigh this amount. Those never have taken into consideration a persons overall condition and the amount of muscle mass they carry. By now everyone knows muscle weighs more than fat so a person heavily muscled may weigh considerably more and still be in perfect health. Dump the charts.

The next overused item is the tape measure. As already stated, how you feel and what you look like is what's important. I see 15" arms that are far more impressive than some 18" or 19" arms.

Lesson 4

Following a boring workout routine. The single most prevalent factor for people to discontinue their training is becoming bored with what they are doing. Frequent and constant change is necessary not only for motivation but for results as well. No matter what your training consists of, change on a regular basis is important. Keep things exciting and interesting. Change up what you do and how you do it.

Lesson 5

Being impatient. Results that are lasting are not obtained overnight. Training must become a way of life just as eating, drinking, and sleeping are. It takes time to develop the habit of incorporating a regular workout into a life style. Be patient and consistent. Think of your body as a fine work of art. Take time to sculpture and form it.

Lesson 6

Attempting to follow a champion bodybuilder's workout as outlined in a magazine. Reading about champions in magazines and on the internet is great and

provides motivation and insight however, there are only a very few true bodybuilding champions. Due to their superior genetic ability to recuperate, most will not find results from following their routines. Learn to experiment and don't be afraid to try different things.

One of the very best things you can do is study anatomy, nutrition, and exercise. Do not limit yourself to only aspects you like, expand and study all you can as the more you learn the better you will be. Always remember there are no hard and fast rules in bodybuilding, it's a constant work in progress and everyone is different.

Lesson 7

Failing to drink enough water every day. What more needs to be said concerning this important item! Water is needed to keep the system flushed of toxins, provides fluid for life as well as being essential for optimal health. Bodybuilders need sufficient amounts of water daily and should never skip on this vital fluid.

Lesson 8

Not getting adequate rest and sleep. Without time and rest to recuperate the body will not allow results. It is always better to do less and rest more. Rest and recuperation is when growth occurs. Burning the candle at both ends results in disaster.

Lesson 9

Performing movements in a haphazard manner. Calf raises for example. Most people do not have well developed calf muscles. Most don't train them correctly. Watch anyone performing standing calf raises and I bet you'll see the same thing no matter where you are; that silly little bounce. People think they are going all the way up on their toes when in reality they are only slightly above being parallel to the floor, and some not even that. The calves must have a full complete stretch at the bottom and go all the way up on the toes for a full contraction at the top in order to grow.

Lesson 10

Failing to listen to the body. This takes time, a lot of time. The sooner one learns to listen to what the body is saying the better you will be and the more progress you will make. Learn to recognize the tell-tale signs your body gives out. If you can't sleep at night it may be due to overtraining. If you fail to make progress maybe your exercise selection needs changing. Study, think, learn, and apply. Your body will guide you if you will only heed its voice.

Okay, these are ten of hundreds, maybe thousands of things I've learned over the years. I've listed them because these are important for the novice as well as the seasoned bodybuilder.

www.PalmieriBodybuilding.com

© 2007 Alan Palmieri, all rights reserved